

REMARKS

The above-identified patent application has been reviewed in light of the Examiner's Action dated December 17, 2004. Claims 1, 7, 9, and 11-18 have been amended, and Claim 8 has been canceled, without intending to abandon or to dedicate to the public any patentable subject matter. Claims 20 and 21 are new. Accordingly, Claims 1-7 and 9-21 are now pending. As set forth herein, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims are respectfully requested.

The Office Action notes that the Abstract should avoid using phrases such as "the present invention." In the amendments set forth above, the specification has been amended to delete that phrase. In addition, the Abstract has been amended to correct a typographical error. No new matter has been added to the application by these amendments.

The Office Action additionally finds that the prior art reference "Zip Change Numerals" has not been properly included on the Information Disclosure Statement. Applicant notes that the Zip Change Numerals reference was included in the Form 1449 filed with the application. To the extent that the Examiner's objection relates to the absence of a date for that reference, Applicant submits therewith a supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, re-listing the "Zip Change Numerals" reference, and providing a date with respect to that reference. Because this reference was made available to the Examiner at the time the application was filed, no fees are believed due in connection with the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the reference in connection with the present application.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In particular, the Office Action notes that the phrase "said panel" lacks antecedent basis. In the amendments set forth above, Claim 16 has been amended to recite "said substrate," for which there is antecedent basis in Claim 12, from which Claim 16 depends. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claim 16 as indefinite should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,832,643 to Delaquila et al. ("Delaquila"). In order for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 to be

proper, each and every element as set forth in a claim must be found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. (MPEP §2131.) Claims 4, 7 and 12-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Delaquila, and Claims 15-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Delaquila in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,505,061 to Neuburger et al., ("Neuburger"). In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness under section 103, there must be some suggestion or motivation to modify the reference or to combine the reference teachings, there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and the prior art reference or references must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. (MPEP §2143.) However, each and every element of the claims cannot be found in the cited references, whether those references are considered alone or in combination. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims are respectfully requested.

The Delaquila reference is generally directed to a full view changeable display sign. In particular, Delaquila discusses a back panel having horizontally aligned tracks, and a plurality of front panels, each having a respective second plurality of horizontally aligned tracks that are adapted to engage the tracks on the back panel. (Delaquila, Abstract.) In addition, the tracks on the aft surfaces of each of the front panels have different depths, allowing the front panels to be positioned in an edge overlapping manner, to prevent light leaks between the panels. (Delaquila, Abstract.) Accordingly, the Delaquila reference discusses a sign in which front panels having indicia thereon include tracks on an aft surface that are adapted for interconnecting to tracks on the back panel and in which there is overlap between adjacent panels.

Claim 1 of the present invention is generally directed to a readerboard system. The readerboard system includes a first panel element that can be placed in a readerboard, and on which a first semiotic element is formed on a first surface. The system additionally includes a second panel element that can be placed in the readerboard and on which a second semiotic element is formed on a first surface. Additionally, the first and second semiotic elements are complementary such that they combine to form a substantially continuous message when the first and second panel elements are placed adjacent to one another. Amended Claim 1 also recites that the first semiotic element comprises at least one of a first portion of a graphic image and a

first partial portion of a textual character, and that the second semiotic element comprises at least one of a second portion of the graphic image and a second partial portion of the textual character, Amended Claim 1 further recites that the first and second panel elements each have top and bottom edges capable of being engaged by track channels provided as part of the readerboard, and that the panel elements do not include any protrusions for engaging the track channels of the readerboard.

Claim 7 is generally directed to a method for advertising. Claim 7 recites designing a message and distributing the message over a plurality of panel elements. Amended Claim 7 further recites that a first of the panel elements contains at least a first semiotic element comprising at least a first portion of the message and a second panel element contains at least a second semiotic element comprising at least a second portion of the message. The first and second semiotic elements are complementary to one another. In addition, amended Claim 7 recites that the first semiotic element comprises at least one of a first portion of a graphic image and a first partial portion of a textual character, and that the second semiotic element comprises at least one of a second portion of the graphic image and a second partial portion of the textual character. Amended Claim 7 further recites placing the first and second panel elements in a readerboard, wherein the panel elements do not overlap one another, wherein a top edge of each of the plurality of panel elements is held in a channel of a track of the readerboard, and wherein a bottom edge of each of the plurality of panel elements is held in a channel of another track of the readerboard.

Claim 12 is generally directed to a readerboard system. As amended, Claim 12 recites a readerboard including a plurality of tracks, wherein each track includes at least one channel. Claim 12 additionally recites a substrate sized to span an integer number of readerboard rows and a full color graphic image interconnected to the substrate. Claim 12 further recites that the full color graphic image spans more than one of the readerboard rows. In addition, the substrate and the interconnected graphic image comprise a plurality of panel elements, wherein each of the panel elements has a top edge held within a track channel and a bottom edge held within another track channel.

The Delaquila reference does not describe each and every element of the pending claims. For example, Delaquila does not discuss a system or method in which panels are held within readerboard tracks by inserting top and bottom edges of the panels within channels of those tracks. Instead, Delaquila discusses a system having tracks on both a front surface of the back panel (*i.e.*, the readerboard) and on an aft surface of the panels for interconnecting the panels to the back panel. For at least these reasons, all of the pending claims should be allowed over the Delaquila reference.

In addition, the Delaquila reference does not discuss a system in which first and second panel elements are placed in a readerboard such that the panel elements do not overlap one another, as recited by amended Claim 7. Instead, Delaquila provides a system with overlapping panels, in order to eliminate light leaks between adjacent panels. Therefore, for at least this additional reason, Claims 7-11 should be allowed.

The pending claims are also not obvious in view of Delaquila. For example, Delaquila does not teach, suggest or disclose panel elements that have top and bottom edges that engage track channels. Instead, Delaquila provides complementary tracks on the aft side of panels to engage the tracks of the readerboard. In addition, Delaquila does not teach, suggest or disclose panels that are without protrusions, as set forth in various of the claims. Delaquila also does not teach, suggest or disclose panels that do not overlap one another. Instead, Delaquila describes a system that enables overlapping panels in order to eliminate gaps that might otherwise occur. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 in view of Delaquila should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Office Action cites to the Neuburger reference as teaching a transparent cover to provide a means to protect the image on the panel element from damage. However, Neuburger does not teach, suggest or disclose other of the elements absent from the Delaquila reference. Therefore, for at least these reasons, the rejections of Claims 15-16 as obvious should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Various of the dependent claims recite additional elements that are patentable over the cited references. For example, Claim 4, which depends from Claim 1, recites that "each of said

panel elements has a height of one track." Claim 11, which depends from Claim 7, recites that "said panel elements have a height corresponding to one track height of said readerboard." As a further example, new Claim 20, which depends from Claim 1, recites "wherein said first and second panel elements do not overlap one another." New Claim 21, which depends from Claim 12, recites "wherein at least first and second of said plurality of panel elements have a complementary semiotic element, and wherein said first and second panel elements do not overlap one another."

Fig. 7 has been amended as shown in the attached annotated marked-up drawing. Specifically, a typographical error has been corrected by changing one instance of reference numeral 604.7a to 604.7b. Support for this amendment can be found in the Specification, for example at page 10, lines 3-21. No new matter has been added by this amendment to Fig. 7. Accordingly, entry of the attached Replacement Sheet presenting amended Fig. 7 is respectfully requested.

The application now appearing to be in form for allowance, early notification of same is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if doing so would expedite the resolution of this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 17, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING FIGURES

Please enter the replacement sheet attached hereto containing Figs. 6-8. As shown in the attached annotated marked-up drawings, the replacement sheet contains a correction to one of the reference characters included in Fig. 7.



Fig. 6

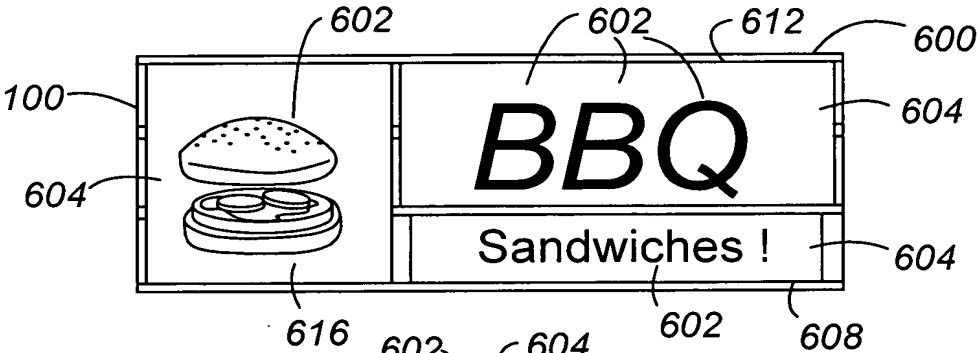


Fig. 7

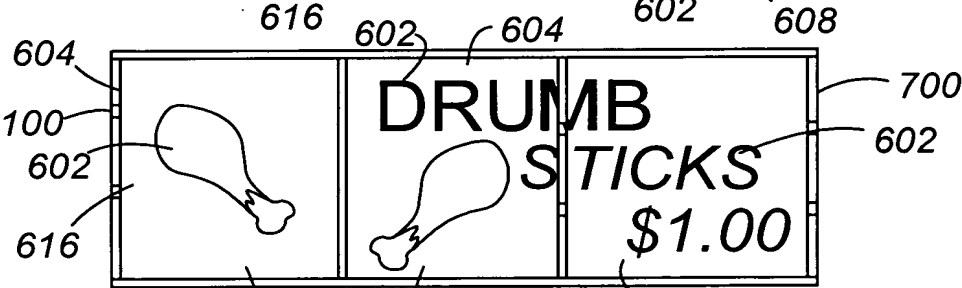


Fig. 8

